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ABSTRACT

The rationale, development, and structure of a high school oral communication assessment program are described in this paper. Following information on competency based education and the need for developing and testing students' oral communication skills, the development of an assessment instrument by the Glynn County (Georgia) school system is discussed. This discussion reports on the selection of primary and alternate speaking tasks (primary--speaking before a simulated public hearing, alternate--participating in a job interview); how raters were trained to evaluate speech performances; how cutoff scores were established; what resources were needed to conduct the assessment; and the effects of the use of the assessment instrument on student and staff development during a pilot program. Appended materials include guidelines, forms, and records used by students and teachers during the pilot assessment program. (RL)

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# DEVELOPMENT OF AN ORAL COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: THE GLYNN COUNTY SPEECH PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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## FOREWORD

In the spring of 1977 the Glynn County School System was selected as a pilot site to assist in the identification and development of components needed for a comprehensive competency based education program in Georgia. After several months were spent collecting ideas from the community regarding what minimum competencies should be possessed by graduates of Glynn County high schools, high school courses were added and revised to provide for the development or reinforcement of the identified life role competencies. In addition, work was begun on developing tests for determining if students had acquired the required competencies. Since an earlier publication outlines the procedures used for constructing paper-and-pencil tests, this document is limited to the rationale and description of the oral communication assessment program. This report is being reproduced and distributed with the hope that it will be helpful to other school systems considering local development of similar programs.

Kermit Keenum, Superintendent
Glynn County School System

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## WHY TEACH AND MONITOR ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

A well known adage has it that of all the creatures inhabiting the Earth, fish are the least likely to ever discover water. So it is with speech communication. Speech comes to us as part of our innate endowment as human beings. We are engulfed by speech communication in all our daily affairs. Usually we are not directly aware of our oral communication environment. But it is nonetheless vital to our well being and survival.

Speaking and listening are prerequisite to success in school. Most instructions for classroom procedures are delivered orally by teachers. Consequently, students with deficient listening skills often exhibit errors which do not reflect their mastery of subject matter, or they may be wholly left out of classroom activities. Students who listen poorly will likewise fail to absorb much of the material to which they are exposed. Speech performance also affects academic achievement. Students who cannot adequately express their knowledge are judged ignorant. Some speech styles trigger stereotyped expectations of poor ability--expectations which are likely to be self-fulfilling (Williams, Whitehead and Miller, 1972). Quiet children may be appreciated for their "good behavior," but they are subject to similarly negative expectations (McCroskey and Daly, 1976). Students who cannot adequately ask for assistance will not receive adequate assistance. One research study, for example, found that reticent students progressed slowly through a self-paced reading program, despite normal levels of reading aptitude. The explanation for this depressed reading performance is that these students rarely approached teachers for individualized help (Scott, Yates and Wheeless, 1975).

Beyond the confines of schools, oral communication proficiency contributes to social adjustment and satisfying interpersonal relationships. Youngsters with poor communication skills are viewed as unattractive by their peers and enjoy few friendship bonds (Hurt and Priess, 1978). Anti-social and violent behavior is frequently attributable to underdeveloped social sensitivity and lack of conflict resolution techniques; remediation programs have reduced the incidence of anti-social acts by means of communication training (Chandler, 1973). Counsellors acknowledge that many family problems are caused by poor communication, and may be ameliorated by improving interaction between family members (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1977).

Speaking and listening are no less crucial in the marketplace. Communication skills rank high among lists of managerial competencies. An officer of one computer firm, for example, states that his company prefers to conduct its own training in programming, but seeks employees with strong communication abilities (Gruner, Logue, Freshley and Huseman, 1977). Professionals--doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers--require more than just subject matter expertise. They must listen effectively to their patients, clients or students in order to identify and analyze problems. They must speak effectively in order to implement their solutions. Individuals who speak in a nonstandard fashion (Labov, 1972) or who withdraw from speaking (Richmond, 1976), will be regarded by personnel officers as prospects for only low status, low paying jobs. Even unskilled workers, however, have occasion to engage in job related speech, including a surprising amount of public speaking (Kendall, 1974).

Speech curricula have traditionally stressed the importance of communication for the preservation of a democratic society. Throughout its

history America has vigorously fought to safeguard freedom of expression under the assumption that full citizen participation is the surest guarantee against tyrrany. Surely not every citizen will deliberate as a member of a legislative body, but numerous opportunities for citizen input are available. These include participation in civic associations, public hearings, and citizen lobbying, especially at local levels. At very least, citizens are responsible for staying informed, and much of the pertinent information is to be culled by listening.

Finally, oral communication is essential to full psychological development. We learn about ourselves, acquire a self concept, through interaction with others (Mead, 1934). Self-actualization, a sense of fulfillment (Maslow, 1954), usually entails interpersonal activities, making contributions, exerting influence, or being recognized in a social manner. In addition, speech can be used for purposes of artistic expression or self-discovery.

The fact that speech communication is a naturally developing constellation of skills does not imply that all individuals are effective communicators. The reader has only to recollect his or her latest family argument or professional set-back to recognize the common need for improved communication skills. Educators occasionally comment, "My students don't need to learn how to talk. That's one thing they can do--too much of." But effective communication must be cultivated. Students may lack clarity in their speech. Their listening comprehension may not attain its fullest potential. Students who communicate well in familiar settings may lack the confidence and flexibility needed to express themselves effectively in a wider range of situations. In contrast to the teacher's lament that students know how to talk all too well, effective communi-

cation requires judgement--judgement about selecting appropriately adapted language, judgement about devising organizational patterns, judgement about when and how to listen.

Speaking and listening, then, are vital. Moreover, educators cannot rely on haphazard, unguided learning outside of the classroom to impart communication effectiveness. Still, of all the basic skills, speaking and listening are most often neglected in schools. This neglect transpires despite curriculum documents which urge attention to oral abilities (Georgia Department of Education, 1968). Undoubtedly a host of factors discourage teachers from implementing oral communication instruction. The myriad of forms and tests constitute the evidence against which public school teachers, administrators, and systems are judged. Teachers are held accountable for students' reading achievement, for performance on mandated grammar tests, for monitoring attendance, for giving enough homework, for not giving too much homework. But teachers are generally not held accountable for teaching students to speak and listen effectively. Consequently, little concerted instruction in speech communication takes place.

If students' speaking and listening proficiency were systematically evaluated, however, it is likely that schools would systematically implement oral communication instruction. That is, one substantial benefit of large scale assessment of oral communication skills is that such testing can guide innovation in this curriculum domain. Indeed, experience in Great Britain and elsewhere demonstrates that speech assessment has a "washback" effect on the amount and kinds of speech teaching undertaken in classrooms (Barnes, 1980).

Another benefit of oral communication assessment is that test results

can be used to make decisions about the best manner to place individual students in instructional sequences. Assessment procedures which yield fine-grained analyses, rather than global judgements, can be used for diagnostic purposes (Rubin, 1981). Thus, for example, students who have difficulty in vocal production factors might concentrate on oral reading, while those whose difficulties lie in the area of organization might cycle through a set of story telling exercises before progressing to explanatory discourse. Students who demonstrate strengths in, say, literal comprehension of spoken materials might advance to instructional units emphasizing critical listening skills.

Speaking and listening tests can also provide valuable information for program evaluation. Since large scale programs of oral communication improvement are in their infancy, it is especially important to evaluate their effectiveness, and to secure data which will enable these programs to be "fine tuned." Program (and teacher) effectiveness is best judged with reference to student achievement on program objectives. If students are not achieving criterion performance levels in language use, for example, teachers and administrators will recognize that additional instructional effort needs to be directed to this area. It is worth while noting, however, that student achievement can be interpreted as an indicator of program success only when student aptitude and institutional resources--the raw materials with which the program has to work--are also taken into account. Also, student achievement is not the only data which might contribute to program evaluation. Attitudinal outcomes, self- and peer-evaluations are also useful information for this purpose.

A final use for speaking and listening assessments is to certify students as having attained (or not attained) mastery in oral communi-

cation. Competency certification in basic skills is increasingly demanded by competency based education movements. Promotion or graduation decisions may be based upon such certification. As described in the following section, the State of Georgia is among several systems nationwise which require that proficiency in oral communication be certified for all high school graduates (Backlund, 1981).

WHAT IS CBE?

Although a majority of the states in this nation report to be in various stages of implementing something in their schools they call competency-based education, there appears to be several definitions of CBE and as many ideas as to how it should be implemented (Schenck, 1978). A quick check in a dictionary of terms such as "competence," "competency," and "competent" provided some clue to the main thrust of CBE, however. Definitions included: "sufficient for the necessities of life"; "having requisite abilities of qualities"; "legally qualified or capable"; and "the quality or state of being functionally adequate or having sufficient knowledge, judgement, skill or strength" (Webster, 1971). If the purpose of CBE is to produce high school graduates who are at least "functionally adequate," how will the decision be made regarding what is adequate and how it will be verified? Some states' answer to these questions is to leave this decision to commercial test publishers who already have achievement tests prepared. By using these tests the knowledge tested automatically becomes "what is sufficient" and the instrument itself becomes the means of verification. These states generally have a minimum competency testing program rather than a comprehensive CBE program as it is defined in Georgia and other states.

In order to make an impact CBE should be implemented K-12 with the focus

going beyond the minimum graduation competencies. Expected learner outcomes should be clearly defined and made known to the students in all subjects and grade levels. Some writers see the CBE instructional process as developing and communicating objectives, diagnosing students' needs in relation to these objectives, measuring students' performance against the objectives, and either certifying attainment if objectives are satisfied, or beginning the cycle over again with the diagnosing of needs (Goldhammer and Weitzel, 1981).

Although the key to CBE appears to be the ability to apply designated skills, the type of skills receiving emphasis may vary to include basic school skills, skills for specific subject areas, skills related to adult roles, and generic learning/thinking skills. Other variables include: type, time, and places for instruction; ways to check learner performance such as paper-and-pencil tests, school products, simulations, and performance; and ways to certify competency attainment that include school personnel and perhaps, community experts (Goldhammer and Weitzel, 1981).

## CBE IN GEORGIA

CBE was set in motion by a Georgia Board of Education policy in November, 1976. Much of the terminology used in this policy was taken from the Oregon approach to competency-based education, particularly the emphasis on, and description of, "life role skills." Rather than limiting CBE to the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, the policy's reference to life role, or adult role, skills included health and safety, citizenship, producer, and consumer skills. This policy was, at least in part, in response to the cry that the value of the high school diploma had depreciated.

In the spring of 1977 school systems from nine of the ten Congressional Districts agreed to serve as pilot systems for developing and testing strategies needed to implement this policy state-wide. The districts of Dalton City, Fulton County, Glynn County, Gwinnett County, Henry County, Laurens County, Muscogee County, Newton County, and Thomas County received state grants to aid with expenses of conducting pilot efforts for three years. Although each school system had special interest in particular facets of the study, all systems eventually addressed the problems of curriculum and instruction, evaluation of competency attainment, remediation, guidance and advisement, record-keeping and reporting, and special education--all in the context of CBE.

After the three year pilot effort the Georgia Board of Education elected to phrase in CBE implementation over a period of several years. The new course requirements, for example, were to become effective state-wide with the graduating class of 1984, while the basic skills requirement would be needed by the class of 1985, and the class of 1986 would need all competency requirements (basic skills and life role).

Some of the pilot systems opted to continue with their progress, "to keep the momentum going," and to not wait for the state-wide implementation schedule. Such a system was the Glynn County School System.

## HISTORY OF GLYNN COUNTY'S CBE PROJECT

Located in the coastal region of Georgia, Glynn County's population of 59,000 is distributed over an area of 439 square miles and includes Brunswick, St. Simons Island, Sea Island, and Jekyll Island. While tourism is a major source of income for the county, approximately seventy manufacturing and processing establishments produce naval stores and chemicals, paint and varnish, industrial boilers, creosoted timbers,

pulp saws and machinery, lumber products, fresh and frozen seafoods, ship repairs, garments, tools and dies, and other products.

The Glynn County School System serves over 10,000 students K-12 with eight elementary schools, three middle schools, and two comprehensive high schools.

In the spring of 1977 the Glynn County School System was selected as the CBE pilot system for the First Congressional District and subsequently received a three year state grant to identify and develop components needed in a CBE program. The first major task undertaken was to identify minimum life role skills or competencies needed by high school graduates in the broad areas described in the State Board Policy. The original policy stated, for example, that "each citizen should have proficiency in reading, writing, listening, analyzing and speaking." Several months were spent gathering input from teachers, students and other local citizens regarding what minimum competencies should be possessed by graduates of Glynn County high schools.

The decision was made during the first year of the pilot effort to use paper-and-pencil tests for several of the life role areas and that development should begin immediately. There was never any questions, however, that the assessment for writing and speaking competencies should be performance based, although development of these tests was delayed pending progress reports from the State Department of Education. A report of the procedures used in developing the paper-and-pencil competency tests is available in a separate document (Yeany, Okey and Bazzle, 1980).

Another task completed was to review course guides to insure that opportunities were provided for learning the life role competencies. This task was made easier by the existence of current course guides that included performance based objectives.

New courses in career planning, health and safety, personal finance, citizenship, government, principles of economics/business/free enterprise, remedial reading, and remedial math were added to the curriculum.

An individualized student advisement system was initiated using cross-graded groups of students that were to remain with the same teacher-advisor while in high school. Advisement would be primarily of the academic type for the first few years.

After two years in the project, it became evident that it would be some time before the State Department of Education could provide state-wide guidelines for writing, speaking and listening skill assessment, so development of ways to verify competence in these areas was begun.

As consideration was given to the identification of oral communication competencies and indicators that would be used as evidence that "each citizen has proficiency in speaking," the emphasis on life role application was continued. It was decided that opportunities that citizens have for oral communication would first be identified and that a skills analysis would reveal the skills needed to successfully complete the tasks. A district CBE planning committee generated a preliminary list of situations and skills which included giving and understanding directions, participating in employment interviews, conversing on the telephone, and participating in various citizenship roles.

## THE ASSESSMENT TASK

After the planning committee completed its initial identification of speaking and listening competencies, several alternative evaluation procedures were drafted. This preliminary proposal appears in Appendix A. The communication tasks which were proposed attempt to create con-

text for talk which have "life role" significance (i.e., employment, peer relations, consumer affairs). They provide students with motivation for communication beyond the avowedly evaluative purpose of the activities, and they attempt to minimize threat. Moreover, the proposed tasks construct or simulate situations--audiences, goals, settings, topics--so that students might practice adapting to situational constraints. The District decided to concentrate on speaking assessment in this present phase of program development, and to select tasks which would not place the entire burden of testing on English faculties, tasks which would conform to curriculum strands in other departments. Consequently, the job interview and the public hearing tasks were chosen for further development and pilot testing.

The interview procedure, adapted from a previous research study (Rubin and Nelson, 1980), was derived from observations of numerous interviews at fast-food restaurants. Students first completed application forms in which they could specify that they were seeking work as a cashier, host/hostess, or cook at a fictional pancake house. (See Appendix B.) The interview schedule, reproduced in Appendix C, consisted of about 25 open and closed questions about students' qualifications, experiences, and interests. It also included one question calling for a relatively extended narrative response.

After several revisions, the public hearing task presented a simulated situation in which students were called to testify before a fictional board of education. The board was considering three propositions of local student interest. (The meeting agenda appears in Appendix D.) Each student chose to speak in support or in opposition of one of the proposals. Students addressed a panel of "board members," actually three students portraying that role.

Several days prior to administration of both the interview and the public hearing tasks, students received and discussed student guides to each of the communication situations. (See Appendices E and F.) These guides acquainted students with the importance of these forms of communication. The guides also explicitly enumerated the criteria along which students would be evaluated.

Thirty ninth-graders of various ability levels were subjected to the employment interview procedure. The interviews were recorded on audio tape and evaluated by pairs of raters. Appendix G contains the rating instrument for this task. This procedure was found to be feasible, but more time consuming than the public hearing task. Also, raters experienced difficulty in rendering judgements because of the interrupted, conversational nature of the resulting student discourse. Consequently, the interview task was designated as an alternate form of the speaking assessment, to be used for those students who require retests after first taking the public hearing assessment. Data gathered from the interview task appear elsewhere in this report.

The public hearing task was selected as the primary assessment procedure for several reasons. It demands continuous discourse, which was found to ease the job of using rating scales. The task creates a situation in which students can express their interest and also draw upon commonly held knowledge. Still, the agenda is presented in a manner which suggests some subject matter (reasons to support or not support the proposition) for those students who need prods to invent their own content. The communication context simulates a "life role" setting in which speech is used for civic purposes. Thus instruction in this language art can be shared with the social studies faculty. The setting

also encourages formal language, not as an arbitrary requirement, but as a natural function of register shifting (DeStefano, 1975; Rubin, 1979) in the face of social distance. Finally, the public hearing task proved to be logistically simpler than the one-to-one interaction of the employment interview.

Complete instructions for administering the public hearing assessment task are presented in Appendix G. In brief, the test administrator begins by reminding the students of the importance of airing citizens' views, and attempts to alleviate students' speech anxiety. The administrator reads the agenda aloud in order to minimize contaminating effects of reading ability. Students prepare their remarks for about five minutes, and are permitted to use brief notes. Students are called to speak in a random order. They stand at a podium inset into the audience and address a "Board" composed of three volunteer students. If a video camera is used, it is set at an angle to the speaker producing a half profile shot. Students speak for a maximum of three minutes each. Experience with students who had received no prior instruction revealed that the majority spoke for 90 seconds or less.

## SCORING THE PUBLIC HEARING TASK

The rating instrument devised, and several times revised, for this project is a rhetorical trait measure (Rubin, 1981). The criteria and quality indicators for rhetorical trait instruments correspond to the particular rhetorical demands of associated communication tasks. Therefore distinct rating scales must be developed for each assessment task. This approach is based on the premise that there are no absolute standards of communication quality, but the characteristics of effective com-

munication are situation-specific (Wiemann and Backlund, 1980; Lloyd-Jones, 1977). The original draft of the public speaking rating form is presented in Appendix H. The final version, presented in Appendix I, was slightly abbreviated to facilitate rating. (See Appendix J for the employment interview rating instrument.)

One type of rating scale considered for use in this project, but rejected, is the general impression or global scale. Raters using general impression scales render a single overall judgement of student performance. Such scales can be used reliably and rapidly (Cooper, 1977), but yield only gross information. Rhetorical trait scales, in contrast, consume more time and require extensive training. The advantage of rhetorical trait instruments is that the evaluative criteria and their descriptors are expressed explicitly. While each student receives a single score which is the sum of the ratings on each criterion, the meaning of that single score is evident. Rhetorical trait scales are especially advantageous in guiding individualized diagnosis and remediation, and in guiding curricular innovation in general.

In order to aid readers who may wish to adopt this, or similar, rating instruments, the following section explicates the evaluation and their quality indicators.

Criterion #1: Introduction

(1) none - Student makes no effort to preface remarks with attention-getting or orienting statement.

(2) just names proposal - e.g., "I'm gonna' talk on letting students drive to school."

(3) names proposal and introduces self - e.g., "My name is Brett Lucas and I'm a sophomore at Brunswick

High. I want to talk about why you should let students drive to school."

(4) names proposal and attempts to capture interest - e.g., "A high school that neglects to teach mathematics would be called a bad school. In the same way, a school which doesn't teach responsibility is a bad school. That's why I want to talk against the plan to keep students from driving to school."

Criterion #2: Position

(1) no point of view - descriptive rather than persuasive, e.g., "If students drive to school it wastes a lot of gas and a lot of students fool around and get into trouble with their cars. If students can't drive to school a lot of them can't get to their jobs or some have to travel a long time on the bus."

(2) distorted point of view as it relates to the proposal - shows confusion or strays from the point, e.g., "I think you should let students drive to school. There's a lot of other stuff students should be allowed to do in school. Like especially it's not fair we can't smoke."

(3) vague point of view - weak in stating position, e.g., "Something should be done about students driving to school. It's a problem that needs to be dealt with."

(4) states opinion forcefully or with situational qualifier - e.g., "Students should not be permitted to drive to school, and this rule should be strictly enforced." Or, "Only those students who can show they need cars to get to work

should be allowed to drive to school. Only those few exceptions should be permitted."

Criterion #3: Reasons

(1) unsupported assertion - provides no meaningful justification for point of view, e.g., "I just think students should be allowed to drive to school, 'cause that wouldn't be too good if they couldn't."

(2) unelaborated reasons given - states one or more reasons in support of position, but reasons are not developed, e.g., "If students can't drive to school they'd probably just park a few blocks away, and it would probably cost more to run the buses anyway."

(3) at least one reason supported - e.g., "A lot of students are used to driving to school and it's important to them. They would find a way to drive even if they couldn't park on the streets around the school. Then the streets would get real busy and the people who live there couldn't find anyplace to park and they'd get all angry. And it wouldn't solve any problem anyway."

(4) more than one reason supported or especially apt support - includes arguments especially adapted to the perspective of the Board of Education, e.g., "As members of the Board of Education you are all concerned that students get the best education. I'm sure you would agree that part of a teen-ager's education is learning how to be responsible. You are all responsible members of this community and I'm sure that you learned this sense of responsbility

by being given responsibilities to take care of, not by having them taken away. I think that teenagers today learn responsibility by having cars. They have to make sure they're fixed, work to earn money for gas, and obey good rules of driving. If you take away the right to drive to school you'll actually be taking away from students' education.

Criterion #4: Organization

(1) ideas wholly unrelated - e.g., "Some students are very good drivers. Not every student has a car. For a lot of people, the buses just take too much time."

(2) ideas only implicitly related (or only one idea expressed - no organizational pattern possible) - e.g., "Most students have jobs. They need their cars. It would mean a lot of trouble for students if they couldn't drive to school and some of them might even lose their jobs."

(3) logical sequence or simple transitions - e.g., "Most students have jobs after school. They need to drive to school because there's no other way for them to get to their work." Or, "Another reason why students should drive to school is . . ."

(4) proper emphasis and explicit connections between ideas - e.g., "There are several reasons why students should be permitted to drive to school. First, many students need their cars as the only way to reach after school jobs. Another reason is that the bus ride is too long for a lot of students. But the most important reason why stu-

dents should be allowed to drive to school is that this teaches a sense of responsibility. Owning a car is a big responsibility. You have to obey traffic rules, pay for gas, keep track of oil changes, and so on. If students can't drive to school, it's like the school saying we can't be responsible. I don't think the school should take away this chance for students to learn to take care of important responsibilities.

Criterion #5: Conclusion

(1) no conclusion or merely states that remarks are finished - e.g., "Well, I guess that's it."

(2) just thanks Board members or just restates position - e.g., "So that's why I think you should allow students to drive to school."

(3) restates position and thanks Board members - e.g., "So that's why I think you should allow student to drive to school. Thank you for giving me this chance to express my views.

(4) summarizes position and offers thanks - e.g., "In conclusion, these are the three main reasons why I hope you will continue to let students drive to school: Students need their cars because most everybody works. It will save money on the buses. And students work hard for the right to have their cars. Thank you very much for giving me this time to speak to you."

Criterion #6: Language Style

(1) Incomprehensible or reads prepared statements - speaks

with pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar which cannot be understood without great effort, or attempts to avoid the challenge of extemporaneous speech by preparing a written text.

(2) slang or inappropriate language used - speaks with enunciation, vocabulary, or grammar which creates an overall impression ill fitting this consultative/formal situation.

(3) minimally fluent, appropriate formality - speaks with normal dysfluencies and "fillers" and with language suitable for use in creating a positive impression on high status individuals.

(4) vivid phrasing, highly comprehensible - e.g., "Ladies and gentlemen of the Board of Education, in serving our county on this important panel, your deliberations have a weighty impact on the future of all citizens. In rendering your decisions you must carefully balance the potential costs of those decisions against their probably benefits. And you are aware, I'm sure, that those benefits and costs extend beyond the schools themselves to every facet of our community's economy;" also includes use of figurative language and analogy, e.g., "Depriving students of the right to drive to school because of traffic problems would be like forbidding homeowners from installing air conditioners because they sometimes put a strain on the electrical supply. Cars and air conditioners are both luxuries in a way. But they have become part of our life

styles. In both cases, people would find a way to get around the rules in order to keep the life style they are used to. Instead of banning air conditioners you would probably find a way to increase the supply of electricity. Instead of banning cars, there must be another way of solving the traffic problem."

Criterion #7: Vocal Delivery

(1) monotone or inaudible - speaks with "mechanical" tone of voice, or cannot be heard.

(2) distracting tone or rate - speaks too slowly or too fast, or with odd inflection (such as rising inflection at end of declarative sentence).

(3) conversational tone and rate - speaks in a manner which does not call attention to itself and does not strain the listener.

(4) emphatic tone, varied rate - conveys authenticity and conviction by appropriate pausing, voice modulation, and stress.

Criterion #8: Gestures

(1) distracting mannerisms or posture - includes drumming on podium, excessive preening, overly casual as well as overly dramatic gesturing stance.

(2) no eye contact with Board members - consistently fixes gaze on notes or to side.

(3) eye contact established, comfortable posture - establishes eye contact at least sporadically, stance relaxed, normal movement.

(4) extended eye contact and some appropriate gesturing - uses hand or facial gestures to illustrate or reinforce language, relies only minimally on notes.

A score of "0" is assigned for nonperformance. A total score is obtained by summing the ratings of all eight criteria. The potential range of scores in thus 0-32.

## TRAINING RATERS TO EVALUATE SPEECH PERFORMANCES

A student's score on the oral communication assessment is, of course, supposed to reflect that student's "true" communication ability. In order for the score to be interpreted meaningfully in this manner, the score ought not be greatly affected by extraneous factors such as the time of day at which the speech assessment was administered, the other students present in the audience, or the agenda item about which the student chooses to speak. We presume that unless some events (e.g., instruction) intervene to alter the student's communication ability, that student would obtain a similar score on another administration of the assessment. That is, we desire that the examination yield a reliable index of the student's speaking ability.

Judgements of quality, such as those called for by the rating instrument used here, are prone to subjectivity, likely to be affected by individual raters' idiosyncratic tastes, moods, and previous experiences. Therefore disagreement among raters is a major source of unreliability in performance scores. The scores are contaminated by error to the degree that they fluctuate because of idiosyncratic differences among raters, rather than because of ability differences among speakers. It is essential that raters receive adequate training in order to ensure inter-rater reliability.

Previous experience with rating programs of this type suggests a

number of design features which enhance inter-rater reliability (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Shuer, 1966; Rubin, 1981). Agreement among judges is facilitated by selecting raters with similar backgrounds, by including raters in the process of constructing the rating instrument, by assigning raters to students of whom they have no prior expectations, by providing raters with opportunities to establish "anchor points" in common, and by allowing raters periodic opportunities to "recalibrate" themselves by comparing their scores with those of their colleagues. These features were implemented in the present project.

Rater training began with an intensive workshop on speech evaluation. The first half-day emphasized the topics of communication apprehension and stagefright, language variation and nonstandard usage, and the role of speech situation or context in determining effective style. The remainder of the day introduced raters to the job interview and public hearing assessment tasks, including exposure to samples of student performances obtained in pilot trials. Raters also viewed and discussed prototype rating instruments.

At a second training session raters evaluated sample student speeches, discussed evaluation criteria in depth, and deliberated over alternative forms of the rating instrument. Detailed procedures for administering the employment interview and public hearing tasks were also presented. Following this session the two tasks were administered to thirty ninth-graders. Raters scored these performances, and inter-rater reliabilities were computed.

Results of this field test were presented at a third meeting. The decision was made to use the public hearing task as the primary assessment. Administration procedures and the rating instrument were further refined. Following this session, public hearing speech samples were collected from approximately 150 ninth-graders. Ten raters were then gathered in a rating session simulating, for the first time, actual testing conditions. The session began with a review of the criteria and the quality level descriptors. Twenty videotaped speech samples were rated in common by all judges. The ratings on each criterion were shared publicly and discussed. Raters rendering scores diverging from consensus were encouraged to bring their standards into comformity. For the remainder of the rating session, judges worked in pairs, comparing total scores after viewing each student's speech. When scores within a pair diverged significantly, a third "floating" rater was called in to reconcile the disagreement. (See following section on logistics of rating.) At a final meeting additional raters were trained, slight adjustments to the procedures were made, and plans were drawn for assessing the entire ninth-grade population of the district.

LOGISTICS OF RATING SPEECH PERFORMANCES

Two procedures for rating student speeches have been tested. In the first method, students are videotaped as they speak, and these videotapes are later viewed by pairs of raters. Using videotapes in this manner resulted in strong inter-rater reliability, but was quite time consuming. In the second method, raters evaluated student speeches "live." The speeches are audio-taped so that a third rater can review them if the original pair of raters fails to attain satisfactory agreement. The "live" rating procedure resulted in somewhat lower, but still adequate, inter-rater

reliability, and was more efficient.

When raters work in conjunction with videotapes, the test administrator must keep careful records of the contents of each tape. (See Appendix K.) At the subsequent rating session raters are paired with teachers from their own schools. The teams are assigned to evaluate videotapes of students from schools with which they are not familiar. The rating team views each student performance together, and may review a speech if necessary. Each rater enters a total score on a tabulation sheet (Appendix J) after completing the rating instrument form. Raters may not discuss a speech until they have scored it, nor may they change their scores after discussion. If the ratings of team members differ such that one rater has given a score above the predetermined cut-off point and the other rater has scored the student below the cut-off point, a third "floating" rater reviews the videotape and marks a third rating form. That third total score is also entered on the tabulation sheet. (A later section describes how cut-off scores are determined.) If the "floater" is not immediately on hand, the team will proceed to rate other students. When the "floater" becomes available, he or she may skip around on the videotape to rate several speeches for which the team has failed to reach agreement. Initial experience with rating videotaped speech samples indicates that the task requires .2 personnel hours per student. It is likely that speed could be increased somewhat with additional practice.

When the "live" rating method is used, raters are again paired and do not judge students with whom they are familiar. The raters sit among the audience of the public hearing. They do not, themselves, administer the communication task. Rather, a third staff member acts as test

administrator, taking cues from the raters as to the rate with which to call students to the podium. In order to minimize "down time" due to the raters' clerical tasks, the speaking order is determined ahead of time. Each rater is provided an ordered stack of rating forms onto which students' names, class, speaking order, and the date have already been entered. Raters do not total their scores immediately. Total scores are figured and entered onto tabulation sheets after all students have finished speaking and are dismissed. A cassette tape recorder, external microphone fastened to the podium, records all student performances. A third rater uses this tape recording in case the tabulation sheet subsequently indicates that the "live" team has failed to reach agreement as to whether a student has attained the cut-off score. Initial trials of the "live" rating method indicate that about .15 personnel hours are required per student.

ESTABLISHING A CUT-OFF SCORE

The oral communication assessment is intended to be a criterion referenced test. As opposed to a norm referenced test, it does not seek maximum discrimination among students, but is instead designed to discriminate only between those who have mastered minimum levels of communication competence and those who have not. Items (i.e., tasks and criteria) were selected on the basis of their context, not because of their difficulty. Ideally, all students, at least after instruction, would be characterized as masters by the test. Students who do not demonstrate mastery on their first attempt have the opportunity to retake a different form of the examination (i.e., the employment interview task) without penalization.

A cut-off point discriminating between mastery and nonmastery was

established by a combination of logical and empirical analyses. The rating form was constructed so that a quality level of "3" on each criterion generally represented adequate performance. The project staff, however, felt that students ought to be given latitude to pass the examination even if they fail to demonstrate adequate performance on some of the criteria. For the original ten-item instrument, therefore, logical analysis suggested a cut-off score of 26. Students scoring 26 or better would be certified as competent in oral communication.

Table I presents results derived from a trial involving 106 students at 3 ability levels from 2 schools. None of these students had received prior instruction in speech communication. On the basis of

TABLE I

Public Hearing Assessment Scores By Ability Level - Videotape Rating Method

(Original 10-item Rating Instrument)[1]

| | Total (N=106) | Low Ability (N=20) | Average (N=36) | Advanced (N=50) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| mean | 22.74 | 19.80 | 21.25 | 24.98 |
| standard deviation | 4.53 | 2.48 | 3.33 | 3.40 |
| mode | 20.00 | 20.00 | 23.00 | 25.00 |
| median | 22.00 | 20.00 | 21.00 | 25.00 |
| achieving mastery (%) | 30.20 | 5.00 | 16.67 | 50.00 |

[1]Potential range: 0-40

videotaped speech samples, about 30% of the students obtained scores equal to or greater than 26. A second trial involved 97 students from groups

similar to those rated in the first analysis. These students had received some instructional preparation for the assessment. They were rated by the "live" method. About 76% of these students attained the cut-off score, as indicated in Table 2. These results were deemed acceptable. Extrapolating to the revised eight-item rating form, a

TABLE 2

Public Hearing Assessment Scores by Ability Level - "Live" Rating Method

(Revised 10-item Rating Instrument)[1]

| | Total (N-97) | Low Ability (N=25) | Average (N=33) | Advanced (N=39) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| mean | 28.29 | 25.12 | 27.91 | 29.97 |
| standard deviation | 4.88 | 4.55 | 4.85 | 3.76 |
| mode | 27.00 | 27.00 | 27.00 | 28.00 |
| median | 28.00 | 25.00 | 28.00 | 30.00 |
| achieving mastery (%) | 76.30 | 56.00 | 75.76 | 89.70 |

[1] Potential range: 0-40

cut-off score of 19 was established.

PSYCHOMETRIC ADEQUACY OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ASSESSMENT

content validity. The content validity of a test is a function of the degree to which its items reflect the appropriate domain of skills and/or knowledge. In a performance test such as the public hearing assessment, context validity refers to the selection of the task and the criteria for evaluation. Any claim that this examination comprehensively samples the domain of speaking skills would overstate the case. A communication

assessment with strong content validity would need to include several tasks representing a wide range of communication situations and functions. This assessment procedure, even considered in conjunction with the employment interview task, samples only from the more formal end of the spectrum of communication contexts.

Still, the public hearing task possesses a degree of context validity because it conforms to the objectives specified by the school district staff: it represents a "life role" situation, calls for extended discourse, and demands a standard-like language style. The evaluation criteria contribute to content validity because, like all rhetorical trait instruments, they were derived by means of a rhetorical task analysis of the assignment. Indeed, the criteria do reflect the classical canons of rhetoric: invention of subject matter, organization, language style, delivery, and control over extended discourse. Finally, the selection of public hearing agenda items, the topics, enhance content validity insofar as field tests indicate that students find these particular topics to be meaningful and manageable. Moreover, the topics, evaluation criteria, as well as the communication situation were all passed by the project staff. That staff constitutes a panel of experts, being comprised of experienced grade level teachers from English, social studies, and career education.

<u>criterion referenced validity.</u> If the results obtained with a new instrument conform to those demonstrated either concurrently or at a future time by some other accepted measurement technique, then the new instrument is said to possess criterion rererenced validity. Two criteria were used in an attempt to validate the public assessment instrument: (1) teacher ratings of typical classroom communication and (2)

ability level as indicated by placement in ability level tracks.

For each of the 106 students who had participated in the public hearing assessment, two teachers familiar with that student rated the student's typical classroom communication skills. The teachers used a form, presented in Appendix L, which was developed for use in the Massachusetts Assessment of Basic Skills (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1979). The inter-rater reliability for these classroom communication assessments were r=.6306. In order to ascertain the validity of the public speaking assessment as referenced against this criterion, the correlation between average classroom rating and the average total public hearing rating was calculated. The resulting correlation coefficient was .8760.

Although the public hearing assessment is a criterion referenced test, some indication of the validity of total scores can be determined by examining if these scores discriminate among students in a manner consistent with previous classifications of students' overall academic ability. The school district divides students into low, average, and advanced ability tracks on the basis of student self selections, teacher recommendations, and standardized test scores. Mastery decisions (at two levels: mastery vs. nonmastery) were cross-tabulated with student ability (at three levels) in order to determine the dependence of student performance on this examination with overall student ability. These cross-tabulations were performed for two test administrations involving 107 and 97 students, respectively. (See Tables 1 and 2 for percentages of students achieving mastery broken down by ability level.) The resulting 2 x 3 contingency tables were subjected to $Chi^2$ analyses. Obtained values of $Chi^2$ were 18.47 (2 df, $p < .001$) for the videotaped

administration and 9.53 (2 df, $p < .005$) for the sample rated "live." In both cases the frequency of criterion level performance was positively related to ability level.

Internal consistency. The scoring procedure for the public hearing assessment creates a total score by summing the ratings on each criterion. One potential source of error or unreliability is lack of homogeneity among the criteria. That is, if the items do not all contribute to a "pure" index of communication skill, then measurement error is introduced in summing the criteria. In order to ascertain the internal consistency of the rating instrument, an index of homogeneity, Cronbach's alpha, was calculated. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0-1.0, and can be interpreted like a correlation coefficient. Two administrations of the speech examination were each rated by two sets of raters. The original 10-item instrument was used to evaluate 106 students by means of the videotape method. Internal consistency values obtained for this administration were .872 and .879. A revised 10-item instrument was used to evaluate 96 students by means of the "live" method. The resulting values for internal consistency were .859 and .817. While these values indicate strong homogeneity for these 10-item scales, it should be noted that internal consistency generally increases with the number of items. It is possible, therefore, that the revised 8-item rating scale may display slightly lower homogeneity.

The internal consistency of the employment interview rating scale was also examined. Thirty students participated in this alternate form of the speech assessment, and were rated by three sets of judges. Obtained values of Cronbach's alpha for the nine-item employment interview rating instrument were .917, .683, and .887.

equivalent forms reliability. Because the public hearing assessment is a criterion referenced test, it is necessary to devise alternate forms of the examination which can be administered to those who do not pass it initially. The alternate form must be equivalent to the primary assessment procedure, at least in the sense that performance on one must be positively related to performance on the other. In order to determine if the employment interview could serve as an equivalent form of the speech proficiency assessment, 30 ninth-grade students of varying abilities were administered both tasks. Each of their performances were evaluated by three raters using the appropriate rating instruments. The correlation between the average rating on the employment interview and the average rating on the public hearing assessment was .697. This may be regarded as a suitably strong relationship for performance tests of this kind.

equivalence between topics. In the public hearing assessment students are able to select their topic from among three agenda items. It is possible, however, that some bias may inhere in the choice of topic. For example, some topics may be inherently easier than others. Or raters may be more impressed by some subject matter compared to some other. Such problems have insinuated measurement error in large scale testing of writing skills (Rosen, 1969). Tables 3 and 4 present summary statistics broken down by topic for two administrations of the public hearing assessment. Two types of analyses were performed to test the significance of choice of topic. Total scores were subjected to one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with unequal numbers of subjects tested in the three levels of topic.

TABLE 3

Summary Statistics: Public Hearing Assessment Scores by Topic

(Original 10-item Instrument, Videotape Rating Method)[1]

| | Topic 1 (n=66) | Topic 2 (n=22) | Topic 3 (n=18) |
|---|---|---|---|
| mean | 22.92 | 23.54 | 22.36 |
| standard deviation | 4.94 | 3.56 | 3.82 |
| mode | 15.00 | 24.00 | 20.00 |
| median | 23.00 | 23.00 | 20.00 |
| achieving criterion (%) | 30.30 | 31.80 | 27.80 |

[1]Potential range: 0-40

TABLE 4

Summary Statistics: Public Hearing Assessment Scores by Topic

(Revised 10-item Instrument, "Live" Rating Method)[1]

| | Topic 1 (n=43) | Topic 2 (n=38) | Topic 3 (n=16) |
|---|---|---|---|
| mean | 28.47 | 27.63 | 27.80 |
| standard deviation | 5.30 | 5.23 | 3.14 |
| mode | 32.00 | 21.00 | 27.00 |
| median | 29.00 | 28.00 | 28.00 |
| achieving criterion (%) | 76.74 | 71.05 | 86.67 |

[1]Potential range: 0-40

The results of these ANOVAs appear in Tables 5 and 6. While topic 1 (open campus for lunch) was the most popular, differences among topic

TABLE 5

ANOVA of Public Hearing Assessment Scores by Topic

(Original 10-item Scale, Videotape Rating Method)

| Source of Variation | df | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Topic | 2 | 14.113 | 7.057 | .346 |
| S(Topic) | 105 | 2100.142 | 20.390 | |

TABLE 6

ANOVA of Public Hearing Assessment Scores by Topic

(Revised 10-item Scale, "Live" Rating Method)

| Source of Variation | df | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Topic | 2 | 16.991 | 8.496 | .349 |
| S(Topic) | 93 | 2266.247 | 24.368 | |

means were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

As a second attempt to verify that choice of topic is not a potent factor in this examination, students were cross tabulated according to topic (at 3 levels) and mastery (at 2 levels, i.e., achieved the criterion score vs. failed to achieve the criterion score). This score tabulation was conducted for the two test administrations mentioned in the preceding paragraph. (See tables 3 and 4 for frequencies of mastery broken down by topic.) Values of the $Chi^2$ statistic were calculated in order to test for statistically significant relationships between mastery and topic choice. For the videotape method rating $Chi^2=.078$ (2 df, $p>.10$). For the "live" rating $Chi^2=1.45$ (2 df, $p>.10$). In neither trial was a statistically significant relationship revealed.

effects of speaking order. In the public hearing assessment, speakers are also audience members. It is possible that later speakers might be aided because they have an opportunity to include material developed by earlier speakers. Indeed, observation confirms considerable repetition of earlier arguments. Also, speaking order dictates the order in which judges rate the speeches. It is possible that some fatigue factor might systematically affect the raters' performance. The correlation between speaking order and total score was calculated in order to reveal these potential effects. For the videotape method administration to 106 ninth-graders, the correlation coefficient was .1325 ($p < .05$). For the "live" rating of 97 ninth-graders, the correlation coefficient was .3119 ($p < .01$). A statistically significant order effect emerged for the "live" rating, though in neither case did speaking order account for more than 10% of the variance in total scores. It is likely that the statistically significant order effect found for "live" rating is attributable to rater fatigue. Were the order effect due to students learning from preceding speakers, it would have been more marked in the videotape method rating as well as the "live" rating.

Inter-rater reliability. As discussed in the previous section on training raters, it is necessary to demonstrate that independent judges can reach similar decisions in their use of the rating instrument. Two procedures tested agreement among raters. First, total score correlations between pairs of raters assigned to the same student were calculated. The average inter-rater correlation derived from the videotape method rating of 106 ninth-graders was .3246 ($p < .001$). The average correlation between raters derived from the "live" rating of 97 ninth-graders was .7239 ($p < .001$).

In the spirit of criterion referenced testing, a second analysis examined the degree to which raters agreed in their classification of students as masters vs. nonmasters. Student scores were cross-tabulated for mastery (at two levels, i.e., those who had attained the criterion score vs. those who failed to attain the criterion score) and rater (at two levels). The resulting 2 x 2 contingency table was subjected to the $Chi^2$ procedure to ascertain if the relationship between rater and mastery decision was statistically significant. The contingency table for the videotape method rating of 106 ninth-graders appears in Table 7, while that for the "live" rating of 97 ninth-graders appears in Table 8. The obtained $Chi^2$ for the former analysis was 46.463

TABLE 7

Cross-Tabulation of Rater by Mastery Decision

(Original 10-item Scale, Videotape Rating Method)

| | | Rater 1 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | mastery | nonmastery |
| Rater 2 | mastery | 27 (25.5%) | 10 (9.4%) |
| | nonmastery | 6 (5.7%) | 63 (59.4%) |

($p < .001$) demonstrating strong agreement between raters. For this administration, 15.1% of the students were cross-classified by raters, passed by one rater but not by the other. This percentage of cross-classifications represents also the frequency with which a third "floating" rater was needed to resolve discrepancies. For the "live" rating, $Chi^2 = 43.893$ ($p < .001$) again indicating a strong relationship among mastery

TABLE 8

Cross-Tabulation of Rater by Mastery Decision

(Revised 10-item Scale, "Live" Rating Method)

| | | Rater 1 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | mastery | nonmastery |
| Rater 2 | mastery | 67 (69.1%) | 4 (4.1%) |
| | nonmastery | 8 (8.2%) | 18 (18.6%) |

decisions. Raters cross-classified 12.3% of the students using the "live" method.

Data were also collected regarding inter-rater reliability of the job interview ratings. Three raters evaluated each of thirty ninth-graders participating in this assessment task. Simple correlations between the scores assigned by these three raters were .506, .605, and .956. The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the average of three ratings was .869. While the lowest of the inter-rater correlations was unsatisfactory, the highest of the correlations provides reason to believe that adequate agreement can be reached in the use of the employment interview rating instrument if more intensive training is provided.

cultural group bias. No data were collected concerning the cultural or ethnic identities of students in this project. Therefore it was not possible to ascertain if the assessment procedure was biased against any particular cultural group. Any future extension of this project will need to examine this issue. In doing so, however, it should be noted that bias is not empirically determined simply by not-

ing if one particular group scored more poorly than another. Rather, a test is biased if test scores over- or under-predict scores on some criterion referencing measuring (e.g., classroom ratings of typical communication behaviors), and if these erroneous predictions are obtained for one cultural group, but not another. Furthermore, cultural group identity must not be confounded with ability level grouping in any such examination of bias. Finally, it may be noted that the communication task and evaluation criteria were constructed with an eye toward avoiding culture-bound standards, other than those which may be inherent in any institutionalized test of communication skills (cf, Rubin, 1980).

WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO CONDUCT THE ORAL COMMUNICATONS ASSESSMENT?

As in the case with any type of assessment activity, one of the major considerations in oral communications assessment is the time element. Since the oral communications presentations are rated by teachers, even more questions must be addressed concerning time. When, for example, are the teachers to be trained as raters? When will the teachers rate the oral presentations?

Rater training can be provided during the school day and in the evenings after school. If a consultant has to travel a great distance, however, it is often difficult for the consultant to spend his/her time traveling for a two or three hour workshop after school. One approach is to work with one group of raters during the first half of the school day and work with a different group after lunch. Using this approach, one substitute can cover for two teachers.

If the rating instrument has been "de-bugged" prior to calling the teachers in for rater training, approximately four hours may be

sufficient. As stated in an earlier section, the selection of teachers as raters should not be limited to the English department. Also, as indicated earlier, some time must be initially devoted to a "we believe" discussion about the purpose and nature of oral communications and oral communicati..s assessment. Video tapes of students of various ability levels giving oral presentations are needed for learning how to use the rating instrument. Inter-rater reliabilities should also be computed during the training.

If the "live" method of rating (as opposed to video taping the student presentations) is to be utilized, the raters should have some practice using the instrument in a classroom before having the pressures of rating large numbers of student presentations.

Obviously the time needed to rate a population of students will depend on the size of that population. Generally, a class of 25 students can be rated during a 55 minute class period, however. Due to the fatigue factor, teachers probably should not devote more than three periods a day rating students' oral presentations.

For the sake of convenience, a class such as English in which most students are enrolled can be used for the rating sessions. The teacher of that class does not rate his/her class even if he/she is a trained rater. Unless the presentations are video-taped the only equipment needed is a speaker's stand and a audio-tape recorder to record the presentations in case a third rater is needed.

Raters in the Glynn County School System decided students were not as relaxed while being video-taped. In addition, the number of video cameras and recorders available limited the number of presentations that could be given simultaneously. Therefore, the decision was made to

rate the presentations while they were being given.

Another resource needed when preparing for the oral communications assessment process is consultation services. An expert in both oral communications and oral communications assessment, plus a knowledge of the CBE movement, will be needed to help identify the rating instrument, train the raters, organize the rating sessions, and assist in analyzing the results. This consultant should also assist in identifying gaps in the oral communications strand in the curriculum and with identifying strategies for teaching oral communications.

The monetary cost for preparing and conducting oral communications assessment is relatively small. Substitute teacher pay to provide for release time for raters, stipends for after school workshops, and honorariums and travel expenses for technical assistance are the major expenses. Some of these expenses would be incurred only during the first developmental year. One approach to estimating the cost of such a project would be to:

1. Decide how many raters are to be trained. Keep in mind you will need a team of two teachers to rate about 75 students a day. How many days do you want to extend the rating process?

2. How will the classes of the raters be covered while these teachers are rating the presentations? If substitutes will be used, allow one substitute for every two teachers (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) and multiply the daily pay by the number of days needed to complete the ratings.

3. Add in $1,000.00 for 5 consultant days. This will vary according to how much time is spent in identifying, developing, or modifying a rating instrument.

4. Decide when the raters will be trained. If it is during the school day, add substitute pay, if any. If this will be done after school, add in hourly stipends of approximately five-dollar an hour.

5. List the cost of other miscellaneous items such as

audio tapes, (can be used more than once), video tapes for training tapes and/or if presentations are video recorded. Other items would include paper and reproduction costs for the rating instruments.

## WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE PILOT ORAL COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Several of the reservations felt by teachers and students at the outset of the project were relieved after students participated in the assessment activities. In the early training sessions, for example, some teachers expressed the belief that "many of their students would not be able to do that." Since many students had very little, if any, previous experience speaking before a group teachers were somewhat skeptical.

Although a small number of students refused, most students did participate. Some teachers were surprised that their students did very well. Some students indicated at the end of the school year that this experience had been more helpful to them than anything else they had done at school that year. Some senior English teachers give their students an opportunity to try the public hearing simulation without the benefit of trained raters, and the students thought it was fun. Having less pressure to perform no doubt made some difference. As in the case when many changes are made, seeing can make believers of doubters.

The oral communication assessment program had a generally positive effect on overall staff development. The experience of having teachers from the English, social studies, and career education departments no doubt had a positive effect. It promoted a more harmonious working relationship between departments. Rating teams were often composed of teachers from different departments both during the training and during

actual rating. Moreover, instrument development and rater training sessions had the quality of in-service education for teachers who previously had no exposure to principles and methods of speech communication.

During the development of the rating scale and training sessions the thought was often expressed that by developing assessment procedures before curriculum development and instructional activities we were getting "the cart before the horse." Since it takes months to develop such an assessment procedure however, and because assessment procedures for the other life role areas were in the final stage of development, self-imposed pressure was felt.

Developing an assessment instrument does obviously force the identification of what it is that the student must be able to do. And this identification of objectives is a first step in the instructional process. Teachers who have been involved in the development of the rating instrument and the actual rating of oral communication performance will also be made responsive to making the necessary changes in their classroom practices. Having this type of involvement will certainly motivate the teachers to provide the necessary instruction.

Recent curriculum revisions have been made to include instruction in speech in the English courses and revisions will be made in government courses during the 1981-82 school year. Staff development activities will also include instructional strategies in oral communications.

The greatest impact of this project was to adopt the procedures described in this paper as the means to assess oral communication competence. During the 1980-81 school year all ninth and tenth grade students were given the opportunity to be rated. Since these are the first classes

that must show competence in all the areas identified as minimum, this assessment was "for real." A vast majority in both of these classes passed the assessment.

Remediation will be handled as a regular part of the English class since oral communication is included in all courses. Even those who passed will be able to profit from additional instruction. Those who fail to pass a second time will be given more intensive remediation which will occur by pulling students from class and after the regular school day.

A report of the results were sent home to parents. See Appendix M Tasks (Skills) in which the student scored lower than 3 were marked as needing improvement. This report will also facilitiate remediation.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In brief, this pilot project demonstrates that large scale criterion referenced testing of high school students' speech proficiency is feasible. The communication task, a simulated public hearing, conformed to the specifications of the district for sampling extended discourse in a formal, "life role" situation. It provides students with a sense of purpose and context, and permits exercise of a full range of communication skills from invention of subject matter to vocal and gestural delivery. At the same time, it provides the structure necessary to control extraneous sources of variation. Moreover, the task proved meaningful and manageable to the majority of students.

The rating instrument devised for use in conjunction with this assessment task was a type of rhetorical trait measure. It provides detailed information about students' performance which can inform placement decisions for subsequent remediation, as well as competency certification and program evaluation decisions. It exhibits content validity within a limited content domain, and empirical investigation revealed strong internal consistency. Criterion referenced validity was also demonstrated. Given sufficient training in its use, raters were able to attain substantial agreement in assigning scores. It should be noted, however, that the videotape rating method was somewhat superior to "live" rating with respect to reliability. Particularly troublesome is the apparent rater fatigue factor in "live" ratings.

This pilot project also developed an alternate form of the speech proficiency assessment, the employment interview task. This procedure displayed adequate equivalence with the primary assessment task,

the public hearing situation. The rating instrument associated with this alternate form possessed strong internal consistency. Results suggest that with more substantial training than that provided in this project, judges can attain acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability.

The development and field testing of this assessment procedure appears to have exerted salubrious effects on oral communication instruction in local high schools. At very least, teacher and student participants have become sensitized to some fundamental oral communication skills. Based on informally elicited remarks, the teaching staff seems to have shifted its attitudes toward oral communication education in a positive direction. Most significantly, the speech assessment program has initiated a process of curricular innovation whereby teachers are providing more deliberate instruction in oral communication than was previously the case.

The costs of measuring and certifying students' speech proficiency in this manner are substantial. The procedure demands considerable allocation of student and staff time, the latter entailing allocation of funds for substitute teachers. Certainly an indirect, multiple choice test of communication skills would be less costly. This option, however, was never pursued by the district. Previous experience demonstrates that such tests are difficult to construct and would, if implemented, likely have deleterious effects on instruction (Rubin, 1981). In balance, the costs of administering an examination of oral communication skill are outweighed by the positive outcomes.

## FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### alternative evaluation methods to control costs.

The assessment procedure described in this report is the product of many compromises. Ideally, for example, student performances would be sampled in a variety of communication situations rather than in one primary and one alternative task. Similarly adoption of "live" rating instead of the videotape method sacrifices a degree of reliability, but maintains nevertheless an acceptable level of psychometric adequacy. Some additional saving of time and expense could be realized by utilizing a general impression rating scale. General impression scales, frequently employed in evaluating written composition (e.g., Hudson & Veal, 1981), require that judges render only a single overall rating of a performance, frequently along a five-point scale. This rating method speeds up the scoring process, and may even enchance inter-rater reliability. What is lost, however, is the detailed information that can guide subsequent student placement and curricular adjustments. In any event, use of general impression marking cannot reduce rating time beyond the length of student speeches.

Two other alternative evaluation procedures shift the burden of evaluation from a cadre of raters to students' classroom teachers. One such method, employed in Massachusetts public schools, requires teachers to rate students' typical communication skills as observed over time in the course of classroom interaction (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1979). Those students who fail to pass this initial screening by classroom teachers are then subjected to a series of specific assessment tasks administered and rated by a trained evaluator.

A second method which shifts the burden of speech assessment to classroom teachers demands in-class performance tests on specified communication tasks. Classroom teachers act as test administrators

and raters. Illustrative of this administrative arrangement are a procedure developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (1979) which includes a single narrative task, and an evaluation program mandated by the Vermont Department of Education (1977) in which classroom teachers administer and evaluate a series of communication tasks.

These methods, which call upon classroom teachers instead of selected raters, incur a great risk of unreliability. Even assuming massive in-service training programs, classroom teachers cannot shed their expectations and preferences, factors which must inevitably color their judgements. Without the check of a second rater, reliability is endangered beyond acceptable limits. Moreover, it is not clear that such arrangements constitute true savings, for teachers already pressed for time must give up some instructional efforts to accommodate to these assessment related roles.

assessing listening skills. The goal of this project was limited to developing and field testing a procedure for measuring proficiency in speech. The project has not considered the complementary and equally important goal of assessing listening competencies. In all but the most formal discourse, of course, individuals shift dynamically between the roles of listener and speaker during the course of interaction. Such is the case in the employment interview task, in fact. We spend more time listening than in any other waking hour activity. A complete program of oral communication instruction cannot neglect listening skills.

Assessing listening skills is a less complicated and costly enterprise than testing speech proficiency. Tests of listening performance can be group administered and mechanically scored. It is

initial test development which constitutes an impediment to measuring listening ability. For the most part, commercially available listening tests measure only limited types of listening (Rubin, Daly, Dickson, McCroskey & Mead, 1981). Many commerical instruments are merely reading or vocabulary tests presented orally. Greater validity inhere in tests which include listening for point of view, listening for decision making, listening for instructions, listening for inference making, and so on. Such listening examinations have been noncommercially developed, must notably by Alberta's Ministry's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement (1979), Massachusetts Department of Education (1979), and Michigan Department of Education (1979). Exploiting these models, it would be quite feasible for a local jurisdiction to create and field test a suitable listening assessment instrument.

K-12 curricular support. Enmeshed in the details of test administration and technical analysis, it is all too easy for a project of this kind to lose sight of its ultimate purpose: to enhance students' communication skills. This report has noted that testing programs often provide impetus for curricular innovation. It would be unethical to pursue this, or any other, achievement testing program if such curricular support were not forthcoming.

Two general points ought to be raised with regard to appropriate implementation of an oral communication curriculum. First, deliberate oral communication instruction should appear at all levels of a student's public school career. The focus of the present project was on a high school graduation competency test. However, a sound foundation for these exit-level skills needs to be set early in the primary grades, and developed throughout the intermediate grades. It is an error, for

example, to presume that persuasive discourse is a fit subject only for secondary level instruction. Younger children also possess persuasive skills which might be refined and enhanced (Piché, Rubin & Michiln, 1978). It may not be wide to assign formal public speaking assignments to second-graders, but second-graders can nevertheless role-play persuasive situations with which they are familiar. Similarly, younger children can learn the value of orienting listeners to the purpose of a talk, though they need not be exposed to the notion of a formal introduction.

A second worthy point about curricular support concerns the range of skills to be taught. The public hearing and employment interview assessment tasks are sampled from a broad domain of communication situations, and they represent only a limited selection of communication competencies. A well motivated oral communication curriculum would not merely prepare students to pass this competency examination. Rather, comprehensive communication instruction would encompass the spectrum of interaction types from highly reciprocal conversation to highly formal and ritualized speeches of appreciation. It would span a range of listeners from familiar peers to remote audiences composed of "the generalized other." A superior communication curriculum would provide students with experience in a variety of communication acts including pantomime, creative dramatics, small group problem solving, and parliamentary discussion. It would include units on nonverbal communication, dialects and language variation, propaganda techniques, and story telling. In short, instruction in oral communication must recognize that assessment procedures are indices of student achievement; they cannot be allowed to circumscribe outcomes of learning.

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## APPENDIX A

1. Some guiding principles

1.1 A commitment to assess oral communication skills is an acknowledgement of the primary importance of speaking and listening in our lives. Oral communication is a tool for influencing and cooperating with others, for discovering our world, and for self-expression. It is also the foundation upon which literacy is built.

1.2 A commitment to assess oral communication skills entails a commitment to incorporate deliberate instruction in speaking and listening throughout the grades. It is true that we learn to communicate through everyday experience. But effective and flexible speech communication skills are cultivated in teacher-learner interaction.

1.3 Oral communication takes place within a social context. Artificiality and an exclusively evaluative climate inhibit speech. Assessment procedures ought to involve tasks which ask students to communicate for real purposes in as naturalistic a setting as possible.

1.4 Criteria for evaluating speech communication are functional. They are defined in terms of effectiveness and appropriateness within given interactive situations. Absolute standards or standards which do not refer to the unique quality of each communication setting, performance, are rarely applicable. Nor should standards of written language be directly transposed to oral assessment.

1.5 Evaluators of students' oral skills must be familiar with the fundamentals of speech communication. They must be trained to recognize the demands of the assessment tasks and to rate students in a consistent manner.

1.6 Assessment tasks must be designed to provide students with feedback concerning their strengths and deficiencies. Feedback should be phrased in a supportive manner and serve as the basis for additional developmental instruction.

2. Overview of assessment tasks

Tasks involve a number of life roles identified as of primary importance. They are set in a variety of interactive contexts (one-to-one, one-to-group, one-to-many). The tasks include demands for both speaking and listening. They incorporate several communication functions (informing, questioning, persuading, establishing relationships). The District may select all or only some of the tasks. The tasks may be modified depending on the resources available.

Appendix A (continued)

3. Telephoning for Information: Task A

3.1 Procedure. Student makes simulated telephone call to the State Labor Department office to inquire about summer employment opportunities. Student specifies purpose of call, listens for and responds to requests for clarification, request additional information on prospects of interest, listens for instructions, properly concludes the conversation.

3.2 Evaluation criteria. Performance indicators are rated on 4 point scale. (See section 9). Criteria include, proper introduction, specification of interests and qualifications, response to request for clarification, conveys own need for additional information, voice rate, volume, inflection, appropriate linguistic style, and courtesy.

4. Job Interview: Task B

4.1 Procedure. Student interviews for choice of positions at a fast food restaurant. Procedure includes filling out application form. Questioning provides opportunity for self-disclosure and self-analysis and for taking the role of another individual. See attached sample interview.

4.2 Evaluation criteria. Performance indicators are rated on 4-point scale. (See section 9). Criteria include appropriate response to narrow questions, elaboration in response to open questions, creating opportunities to show interest and initiative by questioning the interviewer, tactful inquiry concerning salary, starting date, voice rate, inflection, volume, appropriate eye-contact and nonverbal gestures, appropriate linguistic style, and proper conclusion.

5. Giving Instructions: Task C

5.1 Procedure. Student learns a vocational technique by viewing a film or participating in an auto-instructional module. Examples of such technique include (a) preparing mail for bulk mailing, (b) rudimentary operation of keypunch, (c) assembly of simple mechanism (e.g. wind-up clock). Student has opportunity to practice and demonstrate mastery of technique. Student then teaches this technique to a peer.

5.2 Evaluation criteria. Performance indicators are rated on 4-point scale. (See section 9). Criteria include, student gives orientation or overview of task, student gives instructions in proper sequence and in appropriate units of information, uses clear language, asks for and responds to feedback, student explains purpose for each component subtask, student does not rely on nonverbal indicators, speaks with proper rate, volume, inflection.

Appendix A (continued)

6. Group problem solving: Task D

6.1 Procedure. Students participate in leaderless peer group discussion in order to solve moral dilemmas or question of policy within their range of experience and interest. Examples of such topics include "What should you do if you discover a friend experimenting with hard drugs?," "What can high school students do for themselves to prepare for the job market of the coming decade?," "How should we change our lifestyles to adapt to the need to conserve energy?" Students must adopt roles for effective group functioning, clarify the topic, develop potential solutions, evaluate solutions.

6.2 Evaluation criteria. Performance indicators are rated for each group participant on a 4-point scale. (See section 9). Criteria include, does not dominate discussion, seeks others' opinions, expresses own opinion at appropriate point, paraphrases others' contributions, expresses disagreement and agreement, clarifies topic, identifies points of contention and commonality, gives logical support for own point of view by means of example and other forms of evidence, expresses evaluation of others' ideas constructively, voice rate, volume, inflection, nonverbal gestures.

7. Public hearing: Task E

7.1 Procedure. Students participate in a simulated public hearing such as might be conducted by county commissioners. Proposals under consideration include construction of an industrial airport, abolition of all zoning restrictions, increased property taxes for improvement in fire department and county hospital. Student selects one issue on which to testify before the hearing officers. Student decides his/her own point of view. Time limit on statement is 3 minutes.

7.2 Evaluation criteria. Performance indicators are rated on a 4-point scale. (See section 9). Criteria include, expresses indentifiable point of view, gives reasons, supports point of view with information, arguments are adapted to the point of view of local government administrators, linguistic style is appropriate, states point of view clearly in introductory comments, concludes appropriately, uses appropriate eye contact, nonverbal gestures, voice rate, inflection, and volume.

8. Critical listening: Task F

8.1 Procedure. May be conducted individually or in group. Students view a videotaped condensation of a typical newscast. Tape includes segment of political speech, biased report of news item (e.g. highway construction project), advertisements, sports report blending into editorial comment, weather report. In group or individually students are interviewed to determine their discrimination between

Appendix A (continued)

fact and opinion, retention of information, inferences from information given, analysis of persuasive appeals.

8.2 Evaluation criteria. Performance indicators are rated on a 4-point scale. (See section 9). Criteria include, discriminates fact from opinion, identifies point of view and infers motivation when appropriate, correctly categorizes persuasive appeals (e.g., bandwagon approach, glittering generalities, incomplete statistics), infers proper personal action (e.g., on basis of weather report), independent of moral judgments.

9. Evaluation procedures

Trained raters record their judgments on instruments designed specifically for each task. Each performance indicator is rated on a four-point scale as follows:

1 - Remember to do this next time. See your teacher for further suggestions for improvements.
2 - You have this skill, but you can do this more effectively or consistently next time.
3 - You did well, but in order to improve your communication skills, polish up your use of this ability to be extremely effective.
4 - You've mastered this skill. If you can remember to use this ability in other situations, you will be an effective communicator.

A rating of 3 or 4 indicates that the student has exceeded the performance standard. Whenever possible, students will be audio-or videotaped so that they may review their performances in conjunction with the feedback/evaluation forms. Preferably two raters will evaluate each performance. When raters disagree, the taped performance can be used by a third evaluator or team of evaluators for a final determination. Evaluation procedures allow students who fail to be retested at frequent intervals, recognizing that oral communication performance is affected by many variables and may be inconsistent from session to session.

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER - M/F

NOTE: You are under no obligation to answer questions you find personally offensive.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date _____ Social Security Number _____

Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____
Last First Middle

Present Address _____
Street City State Zip

Permanent Address _____
Street City State Zip

Father's Occupation: _____ Father's Education: _____

Mother's Occupation: _____ Mother's Education: _____

Phone Number _____ Citizen of U.S.A. Yes No

Date of Birth _____ Height _____ Weight _____ Color of Hair _____ Color of Eyes _____

EMPLOYMENT DESIRED

Position: host/hostess cashier cook _____ Date You Can Start _____ Salary Desired _____

Days and Hours Available: _____

Are You Employed Now? _____ If So May We Inquire of Your Present Employer _____

| EDUCATION | Name and Location of School | Years Attended | Date Graduated |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grammar School | | | |
| High School | | | |

Activities
(Civic, Athletic, Fraternal, etc.) _____

| EDUCATION | Name and Location of School | Years Attended | Date Graduated |
|---|---|---|---|
| College | | | |
| Trade, Business or Correspondence School | | | |

FORMER EMPLOYERS (List below Last Two Employers, Starting With Last One First. If No Previous Employer, Write NONE.

| Date Month and Year | Name and Address of Employer | Salary | Position | Reason for Leaving |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| From | | | | |
| To | | | | |
| From | | | | |
| To | | | | |

REFERENCES: Give Below the Names of Two Persons Not Related To You, Whom You Have Known At Least One Year.

| | Name | Town | Business |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |

PHYSICAL RECORD:
List Any Physical Defects

Were You Ever Injured? Give Details

Have You Any Defects in Hearing? In Vision? In Speech?

DATE SIGNATURE:

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Interviewed By Date

REMARKS:

Appendix B (continued)

NAME_____ DATE_____ 59

Explain below why you feel you are qualified for this job. Describe any special qualifications or experiences you have had. You may write as much as you wish. Answer this question completely.



Continue on Other Side

## APPENDIX C

### Script for Job Interview Task

I. Thank you for filling out all these forms. Now let's talk a little bit about you. Have you ever interviewed for a job before? Well you know that the most important think for you to do is to relax and act as natural as you can.

II. I see you prefer to work as a

a. Cashier. Any particular reason?

How well do you do in math?

Have you ever worked with money before?

How do you feel about being responsible for large amounts of money?

Our policy is that cashiers are held responsible for any shortages.

That means we ask for a reimbursement if you come up short.

How do you feel about that?

How are you at talking to people?

b. Cook. Any particular reason?

Have you ever been a cook before?

What were your duties/What do you know about the duties of a cook?

How'd you like it/How do you think you'd like that job?

Cooks have to be able to keep a lot of orders, often special orders,

in their heads on once. How do you feel about that?

c. Host/Hostess. Any particular reason?

Have you ever done this job before?

Can you describe your duties/What do you know about what a host/hostess does?

What did you like about the job/Why do you think you'd like this job?

Appendix C (continued)

In this restaurant the hostess/host hires and supervises all waiters and waitresses and makes up the work schedules. Can you tell me what qualifies you for this sort of responsibility?

III. a. I see you're working somewhere else. How long have you worked there?

How do you feel about your job?

Tell me about your duties.

Do you think you can handle both/Why do you want to leave?

How do you get along with the other people on the job?

How do you get along with your boss?

What would he tell me about you if I asked him?

b. I see you used to work at _____.

How long did you work there?

What were your responsibilities on that job.?

Did you get along pretty well with your co-workers?

What about your boss?

How would you feel about working there again?

If I were to call your boss for a recommendation, what would he tell about you?

c. Tell me about yourself as a student (for those who are not working somewhere else).

How do you like school?

You make pretty good grades?

What are your favorite subjects?

How do you get along with your teachers?

What about your principal?

Do you have any favorite adults at your school?

Appendix C (continued)

If I called your principal (or one of your teachers), what would they tell me about you?

IV. Tell me a little about these activities you listed here/I see you didn't like any activities here. What do you do in your spare time?

V. Tell me some of the things you would like to do with the money you earn from this job.

VI. I'd like you to tell me about an incident that will show me what kind of a worker you are. Tell me about a time when you really had to put out an effort to do something that was important to you. You can tell about this incident as if it were a story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

(PROBES - Use the following probes if student produces three sentences or less)

a. Tell me more about why you needed or wanted to do that.

b. Tell me more about why it took such an effort.

c. Give me a better idea of exactly what you needed to do.

d. How were other people acting while all this was going on? Or how did they react afterwards?

VII. Now are there any questions you would like to ask me?

VIII. Our interview is finished now. Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX D

### Public Hearing

### AGENDA

Custer County Board of Education

The Custer County Board of Education will hear comments from students, teachers, parents, and other concerned citizens. Those who wish to speak before the Board may choose only one proposal. Limit your comments to three minutes. Take some time now to think about what you wish to say to the Board Members. Prepare some notes or a sketchy outline to take with you when you speak.

The Board will consider the following proposals:

1. Open Campus for Lunch

   The proposed regulation would permit students to leave the high school campuses during their lunch periods. If the campuses were opened for lunch, students would have greater freedom of choice about their food. However tardiness and truancy might become greater problems. There are presently few suitable restaurants within walking distance of the schools.

2. Eliminate Fund Raising in School

   Many students raise money for various clubs and organizations by selling candy, cookies, and raffle tickets to their fellow students. This type of fund raising helps support such activities as band, 4-H Club, and the Debate Team. These sales are so numerous that they sometimes interfere with classes, and students who are asked to purchase the candy, cookies, or raffle tickets may feel harassed. The proposed regulation would prohibit such sales on school grounds.

Appendix D (continued)

3. Ban Students From Driving to School

Under the proposed regulation, only students who can prove they need cars to get to their jobs after school would receive school parking permits. This would reduce traffic congestion in the parking lot and also help conserve gasoline. At the same time, the cost of school bus service would rise slightly.

## APPENDIX E

## A STUDENT GUIDE TO EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Nothing can substitute for proper training and skill in landing that job of your dreams. But the way in which you present yourself to a prospective employer is another important factor. Many a qualified person has missed out on an interesting job because he or she made an unfavorable impression. When an employer must choose between two equally qualified applicants, the one who can communicate most effectively will have the winning edge.

The application form is the first occasion you have to show what kind of person you are. No one wants to hire a person who writes today's date in the space for "date of birth." An applicant who does that shows carelessness, and could be a dangerous worker. Personal grooming may also be a clue as to the kind of worker you will be. We all make judgments about people based on their manner of dress and physical appearance.

By the time you reach the employment interview, the employer already knows a good deal about you. For the employer, the interview is a chance to learn more about your personality and interests, about how well you think "on your feet", and especially how you handle yourself with other people. No matter how skilled you may be, you can not work effectively unless you can communicate effectively - to customers, co-workers, and suppliers. At the same time as the employer is sizing you up, don't forget to use the interview as an opportunity for you to size up the employer. Is this a company in which you can fit in comfortably? Will you find the job challenging? Of course you ought not appear arrogant, but an employer will be favorably impressed by your interest and maturity if you ask such questions.

Here is a list of some of the communication skills an employer may be looking for during the course of a job interview:

SOCIAL RITUALS- Before the interview begins, do you greet the interviewer, state your name and the purpose of the interview? After the interview, you thank and take your leave and state that you hope to hear from the interviewer in the future?

RESPONSIVENESS- Do you answer all questions and even volunteer relevent information on occasion?

INFORMATIVENESS- Are your answers relevent to the questions? Do your answers avoid vagueness by supplying details, examples, and information about yourself in various situations?

INITIATIVE- Do you occasionally ask a question of the interviewer or volunteer a comment?

INTERPERSONAL MANNER- Are you self-confident, interested, and appropriately respectful?

Appendix E (continued)

LANGUAGE STYLE- Can you speak fluently, meaningfully, and without too much slang?

ORAL EXPRESSION- Do you speak in a conversational tone of voice and use your voice to show your sincerity?

SPEECH RATE AND VOLUME- Can you be heard easily? Do you speak at a speed that can be followed without effort?

GESTURES- Do you use your face, body, and hands in a natural fashion to supplement what you are saying? Do you look the interviewer in the eye?

Improving your skills in these areas will help you to become a better communicator in all your encounters, including job interviews. Probably the single most important piece of advice to carry with you into an employment interview is to be truthful and to be yourself. With that attitude, plus a healthy dose of motivation, an interview can be a positive experience.

## APPENDIX F

### A STUDENT GUIDE TO PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC HEARINGS

Our government has grown complex and touches almost all areas of our lives. Gone are the days when a person could just set up a sign and go into business. Most businesses must now conform to a number of governmental licensing and safety regulations. Governments now also provide services such as Social Security benefits and consumer awareness information that were unheard of when your grandparents were young adults. Education is compulsory for all. You must take a specified course of study and fulfill other requirements in order to receive a certificate of graduation.

Sometimes citizens feel powerless in the face of big government. Sometimes they complain. But ours is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people. Often it is our own fault if our government is not serving us the way we feel it should. By exercising our right to vote we can have an influence on governmental decisions. Often times, various government agencies will conduct public hearings so that citizens can express their views on various issues. You may be surprised to learn how much influence you can exert by speaking up at such public meetings.

The affairs of local county government may not attract the attention we usually give to national politics, but in many ways local government has a more direct effect on our daily lives. County governments, usually headed by a Board of Commissioners, decide the amount of property tax you will pay on your home. They provide fire and police protection. Local government regulates how buildings must be constructed and where they must locate. They take care of roads, water, and sewerage supplies. County governments usually provide recreation and health services for citizens. By speaking at public hearings conducted by the County Commission, you can have an impact on many decisions that really affect you where you live.

As a student, you may be more aware of the role that your County Board of Education plays in your life. The School Board, composed of elected members, sets policies concerning hiring of faculty and funding various programs. The Board of Education must make sure that school buildings are in good physical condition. The members of the board make sure that day-to-day operations like bus service and school lunches are in order. If they have particular concerns about classes or curriculum, the Board members will discuss them with the proper school officials. The Board of Education controls the school system's budget and must set a property tax to make certain that sufficient funds are collected. Like the County Commission, the Board of Education holds public hearings so that interested citizens can express their views.

When you speak before the County Commission or the School Board, remember that the officials are truly interested in listening to your views. But they cannot read your mind. You must speak clearly and in an understandable manner. Remember also that a public hearing is an occasion to air conflicting points of view. You cannot expect the Commisioners or Board Members or your fellow citizens to always agree with your opinion. So you must speak persuasively and give reasons to help them see things your way.

Appendix F (continued)

INTRODUCTION- Do you clearly state which item on the agenda you wish to discuss? Do you attempt to capture the Commissioners' or Board members' attention?

PURPOSE- Do you clearly state your position on the issue?

REASONS- Do you give reasons for your position? Do you support those reasons with facts, examples, or common sense?

ORGANIZATION- Do you put your message together so that the Commissioners or Board members can see how one idea follows from another. Is it clear which of your points are the most important?

OBJECTIONS- Do you anticipate why some people might be opposed to your point of view? Do you show why those objections are mistaken?

CONCLUSION- Do you end your message with a statement that will help the Commissioners remember your point of view? Do you thank the Commissioners or Board members for their attention?

LANGUAGE STYLE- Do you speak fluently, meaningfully, and without too much slang?

ORAL EXPRESSION- Do you use your tone of voice to keep your listeners' attention and to show your sincerity?

SPEECH RATE AND VOLUME- Can you be heard easily? Do you speak at a speed that can be followed without effort?

GESTURES- Do you use your face, posture, and hands to reinforce what you are saying in a natural fashion? Do you look the Commissioners or Board members in the eye?

Improving your skills in these areas will help you to become a more effective communicator in all your encounters, including public hearings. Sometimes people are fearful or timid of speaking in a public setting. But if you believe in what you are saying, and have given a little thought about how to make others believe it as well, then you owe it to yourself to speak up. In this way you can have influence on your community and on your life.

## APPENDIX G

### INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS FOR ADMINISTERING THE PUBLIC HEARING ORAL COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT

A. General Concerns

Our primary concern is that we maintain consistency in administering this test. Everyone must be treated alike.

1. Use uniform instructions.

2. Maintain consistent demeanor--friendliness, encouragement, verbal and nonverbal feedback.

3. Keep testing conditions constant including setting and amount of distraction.

B. Setting Up the Room

1. Set three chairs and a table at the front of the room for the "Board Members."

2. Set remainder of chairs facing the front of the room with an aisle in the middle.

3. Place the speaker's podium or table in the middle aisle even with the front row of the audience. (Speakers will be standing with the audience, speaking to the "Board Members".)

4. If possible, tape the microphone to the speaker's podium.

5. Place the video camera at a slight angle (3/4 profile of speaker) so that speakers do not have to look directly at the camera when addressing the "Board Members."

6. Check tape recorder. Return counter to "000" at start of each page.

C. Introducing and Running the Task

1. Base your introduction on the following script: "A County Board of of Education makes important decisions that affect students, teachers, and all the citizens of the County. How many of you have concerns about the physical condition of schools you have attended? Maybe the schools were crowded or needed air conditioning. Some of you may have wished that better textbooks were available or that different types of classes were offered. Maybe you have heard your parents discussing the taxes on your home. A County Board of Education has responsibility for these matters that have an impact on the day-to-day functions of the schools and on the future of the school system.

Appendix G (continued)

Now the Board Members know that their decisions are important to all residents of the County, so the Board welcomes people to its meetings. At public hearings any interested citizen--students, parents, teachers--gets a chance to express their views to the Board Members. If people come to these meetings and tell the School Board Members what is on their minds, then members of the community may have a great deal of influence on their schools.

Today we are going to practice what it would be like to speak at a public hearing before a County Board of Education. The Board has an agenda of issues it will be considering at this meeting. Each of you will choose one issue about which you would like to make a statement. You will have a few minutes to think about what you want to say to convince the Board Members of your point of view. Jot down a few notes to help you remember, but don't try to compose an entire speech. Then each of you will have a chance to speak to the Board Members.

I know that some people get a little nervous about speaking out, and I know that some people get a little silly, too. But I hope that you'll take this seriously and really think about what you would want to say about these decisions that could really affect your lives. Just ignore the camera. There's really no need to be nervous. None of us is an expert speaker. We're all in the same boat. We'll all just be interested in hearing what you've got to say."

2. Hand out the agenda. Read it aloud. Summarize the three proposals. Ask if they are clear. (In answering questions try to redirect them to the student: "You'll have to think about what that means to you.")

3. Choose three students at random to take the "Board Member" seats.

4. Give students three minutes to organize their thoughts.

5. Students should be called up in a random order. They should speak to the "Board Members," not the teacher, the camera, or the class. Encourage (by example) students to applaud after each speaker.

6. Record pertinent information (students names, proposal number, etc.) on the "Videotape Recording Record."

7. Don't forget to give the "Board Members their turn at speaking. They should be the last to speak, addressing the remaining two seated "Board Members."

APPENDIX H

Public Hearing Feed Back Form
Original Draft

STUDENT: _____ CLASS: _____ DATE: _____ SPEAKING ORDER: _

SCORE: _____ PERFORMANCE STANDARD: _____ PROPOSAL #: _____ RATER: _____

1. INTRODUCTION:

(1) none
(2) just names proposal
(3) names proposal and attempts to capture interest
(4) names proposal and provides novel or elaborated approach

2. PURPOSE:

(1) no point of view
(2) vague point of view
(3) unambiguously states position on proposal
(4) states position with emphasis or situational qualifier

3. REASONS:

(1) unsupported assertion
(2) unelaborated reasons given
(3) at least one reason supported
(4) several reasons supported or especially apt support

4. ORGANIZATION:

(1) ideas wholly unrelated
(2) ideas only implicitly related
(3) logical sequence or simple transitions
(4) proper emphasis and explicit connections between ideas

5. OBJECTIONS:

(1) does not acknowledge reservations
(2) acknowledges but does not refute reservations
(3) refutes at least one reservation
(4) refutes several reservations or especially apt refutation

6. CONCLUSION:

(1) no conclusion or merely states that remarks are finished
(2) just thanks Commission or just restates position
(3) restates position and offers thanks
(4) summarizes or concludes memorably and offers thanks

Apnendix II (continued)

7. LANGUAGE STYLE:

(1) slang or incomprehensible on several occasions
(2) very vague or distracting "fillers" or written language
(3) minimally fluent, appropriate formality
(4) vivid phrasing, highly comprehensible

8. ORAL EXPRESSION:

(1) monotone
(2) inappropriate or distracting inflection on several occasions or memorized
(3) conversational variation in inflection
(4) tone of voice expresses conviction or emphasis

9. SPEECH RATE AND VOLUME:

(1) inaudible
(2) rate too fast or too slow - distracting
(3) speech rate and volume do not strain listeners
(4) variation in rate or volume used for added expressiveness

10. GESTURES:

(1) distracting mannerisms or posture
(2) no eye contact with Commissioners
(3) eye contact established, comfortable posture
(4) facial, body, or hand gestures for emphasis or illustration

# APPENDIX I

## Public Hearing Feedback Form, Final Version

STUDENT: _____ CLASS: _____ DATE: _____ SPEAKING ORDER: _____

SCORE: _____ PERFORMANCE STANDARD: _____ PROPOSAL #: _____ RATER: _____

1. INTRODUCTION

   (1) none
   (2) just names proposal
   (3) names proposal and introduces self
   (4) names proposal and attempts to capture interest

2. POSITION:

   (1) no point of view
   (2) distorted point of view as it relates to the proposal - shows confusion
   (3) vague point of view - weak in stating position
   (4) unambiguously states position on proposal

3. REASONS:

   (1) unsupported assertion
   (2) unelaborated reasons given
   (3) at least one reason supported
   (4) more than one reason supported or especially apt support

4. ORGANIZATION:

   (1) ideas wholly unrelated
   (2) only one idea expressed - no relationship possible
   (3) more than one idea but no logical sequence
   (4) logical sequence of ideas

5. CONCLUSION:

   (1) no conclusion or merely states that remarks are finished
   (2) just thanks Commission or just restates position
   (3) restates position and offers thanks
   (4) summarizes position and offers thanks

6. LANGUAGE STYLE:

   (1) reads from notes or is incomprehensible
   (2) slang or inappropriate language used
   (3) minimally fluent, approriate formality
   (4) fluent, appropriate formality

Appendix I (continued)

7. VOCAL DELIVERY:

(1) monotone or inaudible
(2) distracting tone or rate
(3) conversational tone and rate
(4) emphati tone, varied rate

8. GESTURES:

(1) distracting mannerisms or posture
(2) no eye contact with Commissioners
(3) eye contact established, comfortable posture
(4) extended eye contact and some appropriate gesturing

APPENDIX J

EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW FEEDBACK FORM

STUDENT: _____ CLASS: _____ DATE: _____

SCORE: _____ PERFORMANCE STANDARD: _____ RATER: _____

SOCIAL RITUALS:
(1) fails to greet, thank, or take leave of interviewer
(2) greets, thanks, takes leave in perfunctory or excessively ornate manner
(3) greets, thanks, takes leave in sincere and appropriately polite manner
(4) greeting states purpose of interview, leave taking states hope for future interaction

RESPONSIVENESS:
(1) fails to verbalize several responses
(2) single phrase response to many open questions
(3) single phrase response to closed questions, multiple phrase response to open questions
(4) volunteers elaborate reply to closed questions anticipating interviewer's interest

INFORMATIVENESS:
(1) replies with irrelevant information or states lack of knowledge/opinion
(2) replies are very vague
(3) replies with minimally adequate information
(4) replies contain self assessments and specific examples adapted to interviewer's perspective

INITIATIVE:
(1) assumes a wholly passive role
(2) questions or comments only when asked to do so
(3) volunteers a question or comment
(4) volunteers a question or comment which demonstrates knowledge/competence

INTERPERSONAL MANNER
(1) hostile, overly familiar, or obsequious
(2) apathetic or unusually nervous
(3) relaxed, conversational
(4) confident, dynamic

LANGUAGE STYLE:
(1) slang or incomprehensible on several occasions
(2) very vague or distracting "fillers"
(3) minimally fluent, appropriate formality
(4) vivid phrasing, highly comprehensible

ORAL EXPRESSION:
(1) monotone
(2) inappropriate or distracting inflection on several occasions
(3) natural variation in inflection
(4) tone of voice expresses conviction or emphasis

Appendix J (continued)

SPEECH RATE AND VOLUME:
(1) inaudible
(2) rate too fast or too slow - distracting
(3) natural speech rate and volume
(4) variation in rate or volume used for added expressiveness

GESTURES:
(1) distracting mannerisms or posture
(2) no eye contact with interviewer
(3) eye contact established, comfortable posture
(4) facial, body, or hand gestures used for emphasis or illustration.

## APPENDIX K

VIDEOTAPE RECORDING RECORD - Public Hearing
Oral Assessment

page ____ of ____

Date: _____ Period: _____ Class: _____ School: BHS GA

Tape No. _____ Test Administrator: _____

| Speaking Order | Tape Counter | Student Name | Proposal No. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 000 | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
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| 18. | | | |
| 19. | | | |
| 20. | | | |

rater # 1: _____
rater # 2: _____

Oral Communication Assessment
Raters' Tally Sheet

| tape # | counter # | student name | Rater #1 total | Rater #1 +/- cut-off | Rater #2 total | Rater #2 +/- cut-off | Floater total | Floater +/- cut-off |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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APPENDIX L

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APPENDIX M

GLYNN COUNTY SCHOOLS
SPEAKING COMPETENCY REPORT
1980-81
Tenth Grade

_____ participated in an activity designed
Name of Student
to test his/her ability to speak during a public hearing. The results of this test are given below.

_____ The student achieved at least the minimum level required for graduation. Efforts should me made, however, to continue development of these skills.

_____ The student failed to achieve the minimum level required for graduation. The student needs to work very hard to improve these skills.

Areas in which improvement is needed the most:

_____ introduction

_____ position

_____ reasons

_____ organization

_____ conclusion

_____ language style

_____ vocal delivery

_____ gestures